

1414 S Weller St Seattle, WA

Historic Name: Japanese Language School

Certificate of Approval Application



# Japanese Language School

## DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK

*This school is important for its association with Seattle's significant Japanese community. It enhances our knowledge of the development of that community and residential development in Seattle. The one story school was built about 1910 and the two story building in 1917. It continues as a Japanese language school today.*

— Narrative from Seattle Historical Sites [website](#)

Public artists Kenji Hamai Stoll and Erin Shigaki will paint and install a 2-dimensional public-facing mural entitled *We the Ancestors*. The Japanese Language School, also known as the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Washington, is the oldest cultural center and language school in the region. Built in 1912 in what was Seattle's "Nihonmachi" or "Japan Town", the Japanese Language School has persevered through decades of anti-Asian legislation and massive neighborhood displacement. Originally established as a language school, the Japanese Language School also served as transitional housing for Japanese American families returning from WWII incarceration, and now hosts a variety of educational, arts, and cultural programs for the community, a karate and judo dojo, a taiko drum space, historical exhibits, gathering space, and a Japanese resale store. This permanent public art piece seeks to preserve, honor, and celebrate the Japanese Language School's legacy, and the stories of Washington's larger Japanese

American community. The Japanese Language School is located at 1414 S. Weller St, Seattle, WA 98144.

### **Project Goals**

- Create a strong visual and cultural marker for the Japanese Language School which sits on a busy 4-lane urban street in the rapidly gentrifying Central District neighborhood of Seattle
- Convey the perseverance, resilience and strength of the Japanese American community and story
- Preserve stories that mark Asian American history
- Draw inspiration from the voices in the Japanese American community and the artists' personal connections to the space, and provide inspiration for the generations to come

# Japanese Language School TEAM

## Japanese Cultural Center of Washington

- Karen Yoshitomi, Executive Director

## Artists/Designers

- Kenji Hamai Stoll (he/him) is a visual artist based in Tacoma, Washington. He has an interest and focus in public art, large scale murals, design, and community development. [yokenji.net](http://yokenji.net)
- Erin Shigaki (she/they) is a yonsei (fourth-generation) Japanese American born and raised in Seattle, WA who creates work that is community-based and focused on BIPOC experiences. She believes that wielding art and activism to tell these stories can educate, redress, and incrementally heal. [purplegatedesign.com](http://purplegatedesign.com)

## Past public art image samples



above: Kenji Hamai Stoll



# Japanese Language School TEAM

## Past public art image samples (continued)



Kenji Hamai Stoll



Erin Shigaki

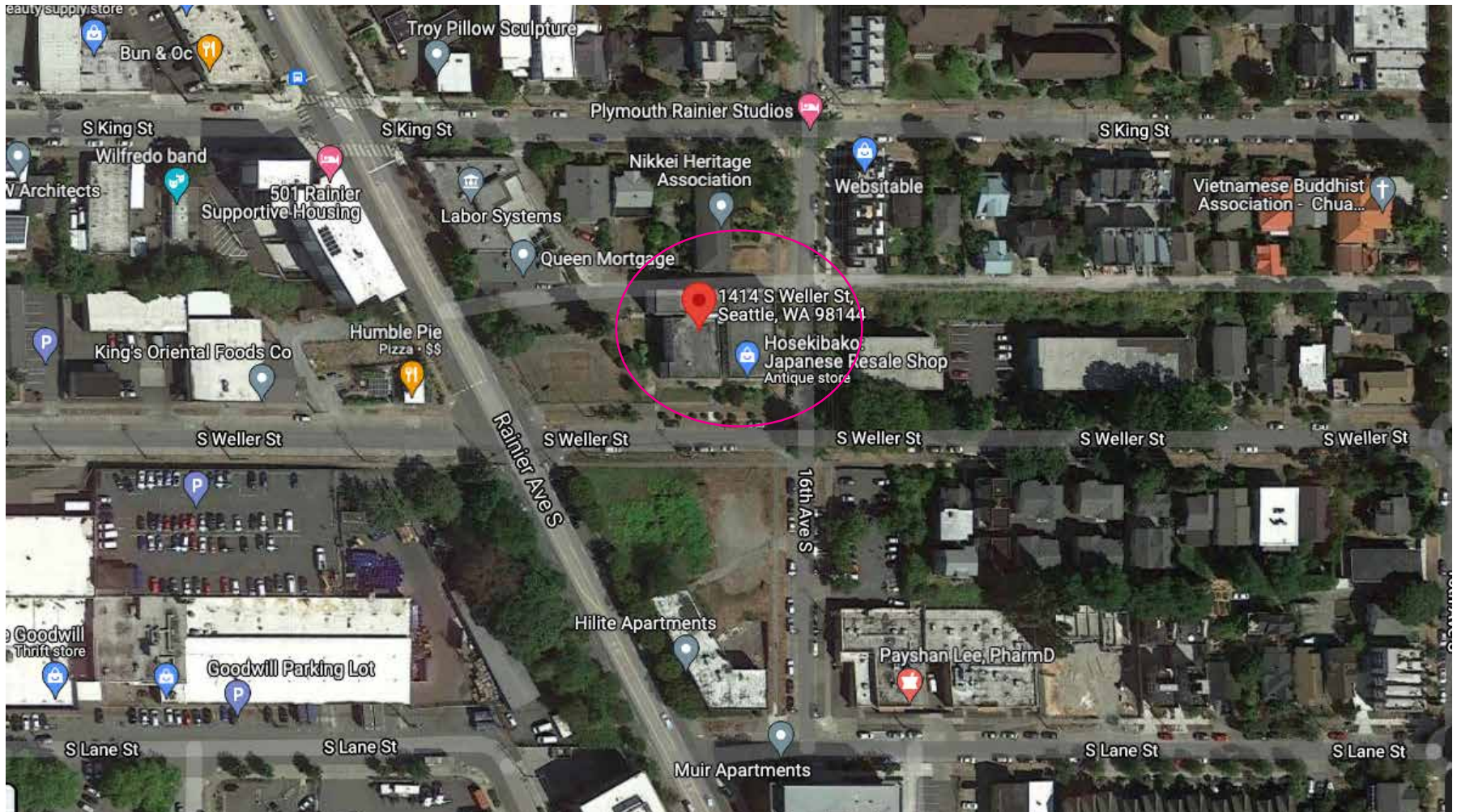


above: Erin Shigaki



# Japanese Language School

## CONTEXT PLAN & SITE, WIDE VIEW



# Japanese Language School

## CONTEXT PLAN & SITE, ZOOMED VIEW





# Japanese Language School

## EXISTING SITE, EXTERIOR



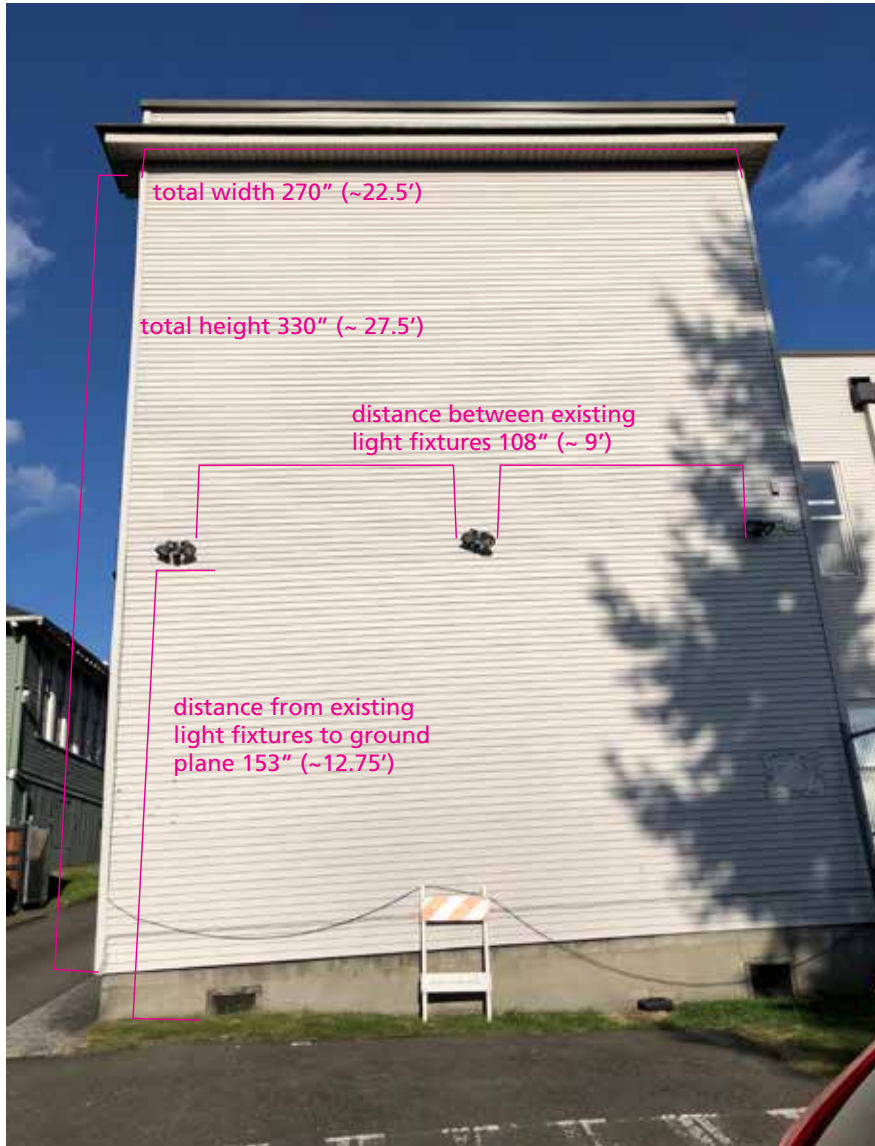
Japanese Language School west facing side viewed from from Rainier Avenue South



Japanese Language School proposed northwest wall viewed from Rainier Avenue South

# Japanese Language School

## EXISTING SITE, EXTERIOR





# Japanese Language School

## PROPOSED MATERIAL

ACM (aluminum composite material) is a material which is a rigid sheet made of two sheets of pre-finished aluminum, bonded to a polyethylene core. Light-weight, without sacrificing durability, ACM sheets are often used for outdoor signage, and channel letter backings. The material is available 3-6mm in thickness.

For our mural, the material will be digitally printed, hand-painted with acrylic housepaint, and coated for UV and weather protection.



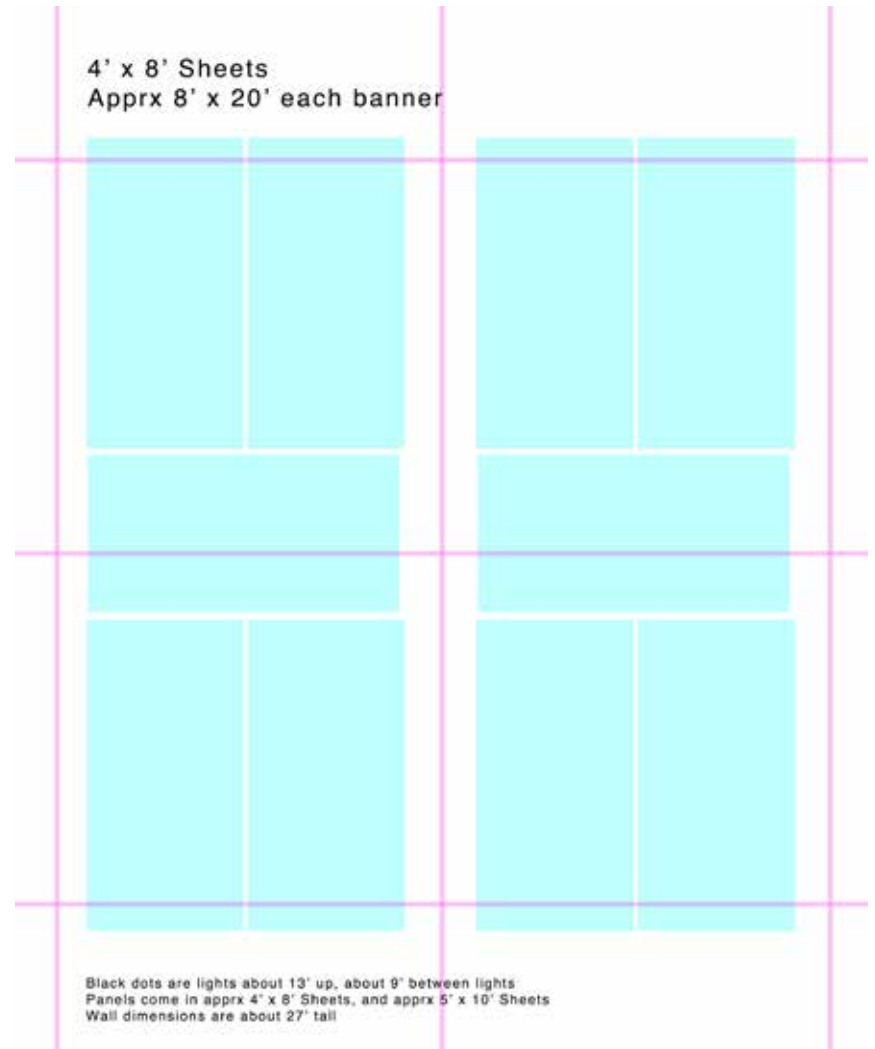
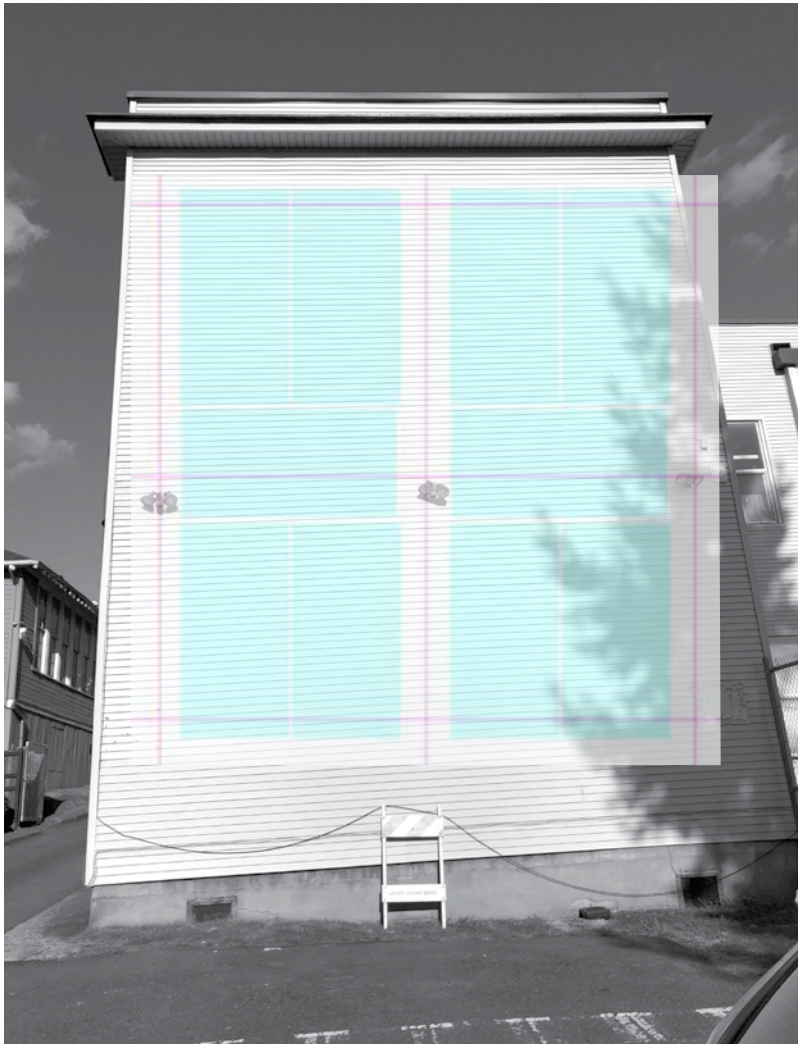
ACM panels in outdoor usage



ACM sample close up

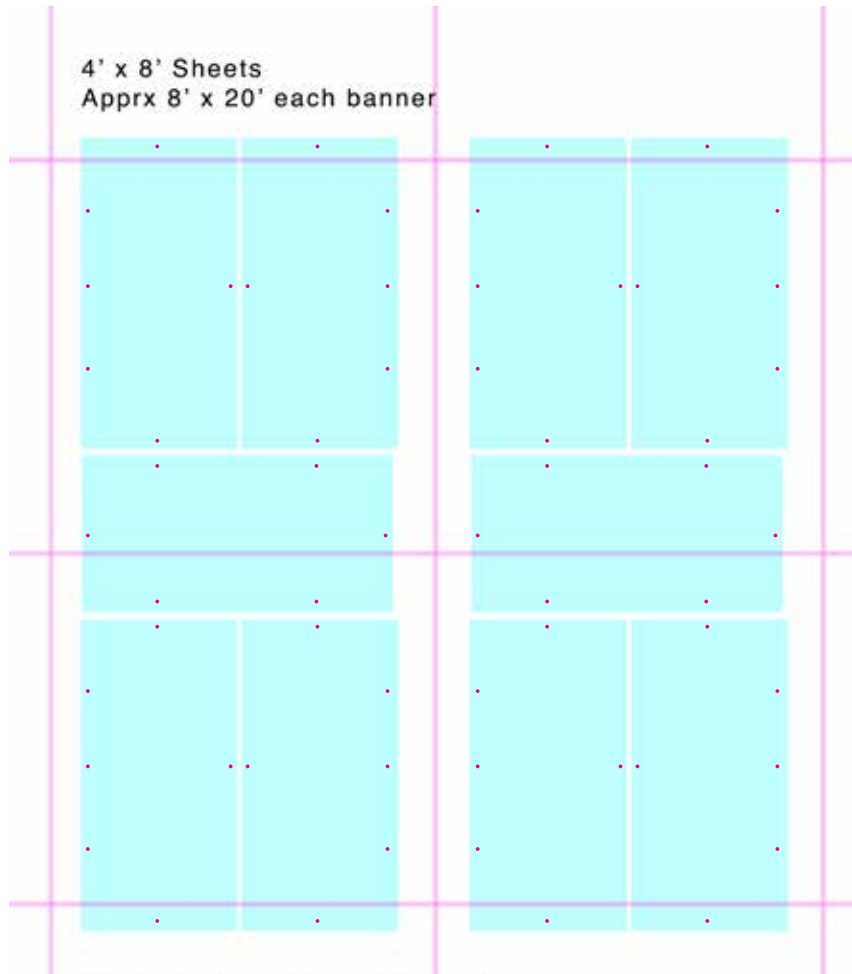
# Japanese Language School

## PROPOSED INSTALLATION LAYOUT



# Japanese Language School

## PROPOSED INSTALLATION TECHNIQUE



Using a professional installation team working on an articulated boom lift, the panels will be bolted and anchored into the siding approximately every 2 feet. This installation technique will not disturb any of the structural materials beneath the siding.



# Japanese Language School

## PROPOSED PROJECT TIMELINE

### 2021

- June** – Invited to create mural by Japanese Language School/JCCCW Executive Director, Karen Yoshitomi
- July** – Applied for Abbey Mural Prize to partially cover costs. The prize is a national competition run by the National Academy of Design in New York City.
- Oct** – Awarded Abbey Mural Prize
- Nov/Dec** – Material and installation pricing and research, initial sketches, community outreach

### 2022

- Jan/Feb** – Historic Preservation Board Review
- Feb/March** – Possible Historic Preservation application refinement, design
- April** – Design refinement
- May** – Print, paint and install
- June** – Project completion